WHO AND WHAT IS CHRIST?

TRANSLATED FROM THE FIFTH GERMAN EDITION

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BY

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present translation of the popular German pamphlet *Was ist Christus* will, it is hoped, prove a useful and opportune publication. A few notes have been added, and one or two slight modifications of the text have been made, but in general the substance of the original has been faithfully reproduced. In the later forms of scepticism prevalent in England, so much is borrowed from Germany that it is not inappropriate to take a German answer to difficulties with which the scholars of that country have been long familiar. The present answer is plain, untechnical, and vigorous; but with all its simplicity it proceeds according to the strictest logic, and within its prescribed limits is really exhaustive. Probably it will be found serviceable as a popular manual on the fundamental questions of Christianity for those who have need of some such help, but have no time for the learned treatises more fully entering into the subject.

E. E.

OCT 2 1986

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WHO AND WHAT IS CHRIST?

THE question, "Who and What is Christ?" is a decisive one for the whole of Christianity. If Christ is only a man, like every other man, though perhaps the wisest and most perfect that has yet appeared on earth, then Christianity is merely a human religion, which no one is bound to accept, and which every one may mould as he thinks best. On the other hand, if Christ, as has been always believed by far the greatest number of Christians, is the messenger of God, nay, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who, without suffering any change in His Divinity, took a human soul and a human body in time, and became very man, then Christianity is the only true religion revealed by God, and all men are rigidly bound to obey it. Accordingly, the shortest way of arriving at a clear judgment as to the value and truth of Christianity is to answer the question, "Who and What is Christ?" In the following pages we shall try to settle this in a way which every one can understand. But first of all we must have a firm historical foundation under our feet.

Now, when we say, that more than eighteen hundred years ago there lived in Palestine a man called Jesus of Nazareth, with the surname of Christ, that this man caused great astonishment by his teaching and works, and was crucified, we condense the story of Christ so closely that there is no Christian, no Jew, no Mohammedan, no Pagan, no human being that would deny it. In other words, the historical existence and the crucifixion of Christ are world-known, undeniable, and never-denied facts.

If we now put the further question, "Why was Christ crucified?" then all Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, Pagans, in short, all human beings that know anything about Christ, will answer that He was crucified because He asserted that He was God, God's Son, the promised Redeemer of the world. In other words, Christ's assertion that He is a Divine Person, the Redeemer of the world, is a fact known to the world at large. Christians themselves affirm it and cannot deny it, for it is unquestionably contained in their Gospels. Apart from the numerous utterances, in this sense, of Christ to His people, we see in the records of His condemnation to death, that He declared on oath and before the tribunal that He was God's Son and the promised Messiah. This testimony of Christ's must be looked at more closely.

The High Priest, as president of the supreme court of justice, asks Christ, in the name of the most high God, to say, whether He is the Messiah, the Son of

God.* Let us note: (1) The court is a competent one, and recognized by Christ Himself. (2) The question is put very exactly. Christ is not asked whether He is a child of God, adopted by grace, a friend of God; every Israelite was regarded as such, and this assertion would never have become matter of a judicial investigation; Christ, moreover, had expressly† maintained that He was the only-begotten Son of God, and in His discourses had laid claim to all the attributes of God. (3) The question is put with all the solemnity of an oath. (4) It is the most important question which could be put on earth, whether with regard to the honour of God or to the salvation of all mankind. We are certainly all agreed that Christ's answer, if He were deserving of any respect at all, must be the whole truth and nothing but the truth, without any equivocation, which would be indeed equivalent to false swearing. And what answer does He give? A simple, plain, "I am."‡ And in order that no shadow of doubt may rest on the meaning of the words, "God's Son," He declares to His judges that He will come in the glory of His Father, to execute upon all men that judgment which belongs to God alone.

On receiving this answer, the president declares to his fellow-judges that it would be quite superfluous to hear other witnesses as to utterances of Christ in this sense. "Why," says he, "we have heard the blas-

* St. Matt. xxvi. 63. † St. John iii. 16.
‡ St. Mark xiv. 62; St. Matt. xxvi. 64; St. Luke xxii. 70.

phemy out of His own mouth. What think ye?" And they all, let it be well noted, they all reply, "He is guilty of death."* None of the judges has any further doubt as to the adequately exact way in which the question has been put, nor as to the meaning of the answer. With one consent, without hesitation, they decree the severest punishment that is possible. And Christ hears in what sense His answer has been taken, and that it has been regarded as the greatest insult to God; He hears how He has been declared the most depraved of men, and condemned to death, and—He adds nothing to His declaration. He feels how He is maltreated as being a blasphemer, and conducted to death, and He does not revoke what He has said, nor attempt to explain it away. On the contrary, from this moment He gives no answer to any further question, as one who has said everything, and, moreover, clearly enough. Like a lamb that opens not its mouth when led to slaughter, He goes to the most disgraceful of deaths after enduring all manner of ignominious maltreatment, and it is only on the Cross He opens His lips, as He prays to His Father to forgive His enemies. To the poor thief He promises everlasting happiness, and gives back His soul into the hands of His Father. Such is the report of the records, such is the belief of Christians.

Has Christ said the truth or not? This is the question which now decides everything. If He has,

* St. Matt. xxvi. 66; St. Mark xiv. 64.

then we must all fall down before the Crucified One and worship Him; then Christianity is Divine truth, the hopes of Christians are built on ground as firm as a rock, and we must love without measure Him Who first and without measure loved us.

If, on the other hand, Christ has not said the truth, then only one of two hypotheses is conceivable: either he said what was not true, knowing it to be so, not only frequently in his discourses to the people, but also on oath before the tribunal; he claimed with full consciousness all the rights of God, demanded from all men that they should believe and obey him, rest their hopes on him, and love him above all, even above father and mother, brother and sister, wife, and child, and self; and in order to make this immense piece of deception credible, he meets death as if he were the gentlest of all men, prays to God to forgive his enemies, promises in his dying moments a criminal his everlasting Kingdom, and with his last breath pretends to be God's friend! What name shall we give him? Or, he *imagined* that he was God, the Redeemer of the world. And from this insane idea he could not be detached by contradictions, not even by the most fearful torture, the most painful death. What else, then, can the world do but heartily pity him. To conclude: As it is an undeniable fact, and known to the whole world, that Christ affirmed He was the Son of God, of the same essence as the Father, the promised Messiah, the Redeemer of the world, and for this reason was

crucified, we must either believe and worship Him, or turn away from Him, as an impostor, with the deepest disgust, or as being an incurable monomaniac, with the most intense commiseration. No one, however, who does not believe in the Godhead of Christ, can call himself a Christian, because the very smallest self-respect forbids every man to call himself the worshipper and disciple of an impostor or of a madman.

The attempt of the so-called rationalists to evade this decisive Yes or No must be pronounced a failure. They are very well aware that it would not harm them to reject the name of Christian, but, nevertheless, they are restrained by a certain timidity from breaking completely with their Christian fellow-citizens. Or perhaps many of them live with wife and child in some Christian pastoral office. Having no faith, they attempt to eliminate everything that is supernatural and Divine from Christianity, and to make out of it a purely natural, human religion. What do they consider Christ to be? A Sage, who was aware that He had a very beautiful and humane system of morality. From love to mankind He wished to procure currency for this beautiful morality. But for this a higher reputation was necessary. At that time the superstitious Jewish people believed in a certain Messiah, Son of God, Redeemer of mankind, Who was said to have been foretold by the Prophets, and the Jews expected His coming just at the time of Christ. What did Christ do? He

made use of the popular errors of His contemporaries, pretending that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, and He succeeded in obtaining credence and becoming the great reformer, the greatest benefactor of mankind. Therefore, without believing in His Godhead, without seeing in Him more than a man, the rationalists, the "illuminated" people, have a high respect for Christ, and call themselves His followers and adherents. Now, what is to be said to this? What are we to think of this specimen of rationalistic logic and morality? According to their conception, Christ is and remains an impostor. But He has a good intention in being such. By a lie He obtains currency for the truth—He founds the kingdom of virtue upon the lowest depth of wickedness. In His case the good end justifies the most wicked means. And for all this the rationalists admire Him, praise Him as the holiest of men, and will not hear of any other religion but His; on it they build their hope for time and eternity! If, in truth, men are wicked enough to impute their own wickedness to Christ, they are also foolish enough to attribute their own folly to Him. Christ was *not* attacked on account of His ethical teaching, He was *not* nailed to the Cross on account of His morality, but solely because He asserted that He was the Son of God. The claiming of the Messianic dignity, the appropriation of the Godhead, in a word, what was supernatural in Him and in Christianity did not serve to introduce His moral teaching, but was the greatest

hindrance to it. And what else is it that rationalists and all unbelievers attack at the present day but just the Divinity of Christ and all that is supernatural in Christianity?

The Christ of the rationalists can be accepted by no fair-minded man. We must accept Christ for what He declared He was on oath before the tribunal, or not at all; and he who rejects the Godhead of Christ, must reject both Christ and Christianity, for assuredly Christianity, if true, cannot be founded on a lie, neither can imposture beget Truth. Furthermore, with Christianity a logically thinking man must also reject everything that belongs to Christianity, everything that it has brought to mankind. When a divorce is effected, the dowry must be restored. Let us now go through the eighteen Christian centuries, and take away from the lives of peoples all the knowledge, all the light, all the virtue, happiness, consolation, and culture which they owe to Christianity, commencing from those who were sunk in the most perverted forms of civilization, to the poor barbarians that knew of nought but hunting and fishing, war and murder, until Christianity took them by the hand and led them thither where they now stand. Take all that, and cast it away as the fruit of a most gigantic imposture or of a most incurable piece of lunacy. Can you do so? If you are able to do so, then cast away your poor reason in addition, and renounce all hope of the truth.

For you cannot deny that belief in the Godhead of Christ was always regarded as the foundation of Christianity, that Christianity for eighteen centuries was the religion of the most civilized peoples, that among the myriads of Christians who lived on the whole earth in the course of eighteen centuries, there were millions of thorough, learned, and profound inquirers, who were earnest in the search after truth, and had no reason for deceiving themselves, and taking on themselves the heavy burden of Christianity. Have all these gone wrong, and allowed themselves to be seduced by a lying or demented Jew? What, then, is human reason? How far can you confide, then, in *yours?*

From what has been so far said, this much is clear; firstly, that no man, who will not believe in the Godhead of Christ, can call himself Christian, and secondly, that Christ's judicial declaration on oath as to His Godhead and Messianic dignity, which was sealed by His Death, is in itself perfectly credible.* As a fact, at the time of the Christian persecutions, when, in view of the martyr's pyre and the rack, a Christian was asked, "Art thou a Christian?" and stoutly answered, "Yes" in reply, nobody doubted that he said the truth. No one tells lies in order to suffer death.

But however credible in itself Christ's testimony may be, still these questions might be put: firstly,

* That is, from the impossibility of either the supposition of imposture or of insanity, Christ's credibility as a witness remains established.—E.

is what Christ's testimony presupposes or contains in itself possible? and secondly, is there anything in Christ personally which can make His testimony suspicious? In the following pages we shall answer these questions.

Possibility of Christ's Testimony.

When Christ affirmed that He was the Son of God Who had become Man in order to redeem the world, He laid down as foundations of Christianity the three doctrines of the Divine Trinity, of the Incarnation of the Second Divine Person and of the Redemption of mankind by the God-Man. These three fundamental doctrines of Christianity have always been regarded by Christians as mysteries of faith, *i.e.*, as teachings whose meaning we understand so far as to be able to distinguish them from every contrary one, but which we are never able to understand or comprehend perfectly in themselves. We accept them as true, because the omniscient and true God testifies to them, just as in natural matters an unlearned person accepts and must accept as true very many things on the testimony of experienced and learned men without being able to understand and verify them himself.

Christ's testimony, it is true, is in itself completely adequate to give us certainty regarding the truth of all with which it deals, but because in religious matters people do not believe so readily as

in others, and search for every kind of pretext to escape the duty of believing, every pretext must therefore be taken from them.

We now set up the proposition: If what Christ said on oath is not impossible, there is no reason for rejecting it; but human reason will never be able to show an internal contradiction or impossibility in the three fundamental doctrines of Christianity. They may, therefore, be true.

1. *The Doctrine of the Divine Trinity.*—If there is any doctrine clearly and undeniably contained in the sacred books of Christians, it is this, that there is only one Divine Being, only one God. At the same time mention is frequently made, particularly in the books of the New Covenant, of Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to each of Whom the Godhead, the Divine Essence, and all attributes of the Godhead are ascribed and imputed in common. Accordingly the one, indivisible, Divine Essence belongs to Three Persons, and there is one God in Three Persons, Who are, it is true, distinct in personality, but in essence are One.

From this exposition of the doctrine, we learn that there are not three Divine Beings, not three Gods, but that there is only one God, that there is not only one Divine Person, but that there are Three. We are therefore able to distinguish this doctrine from every contrary one; but nevertheless we do not comprehend the inmost Essence and Life

of God, and therefore we cannot assert that the doctrine contains a contradiction in itself. The vulgar objection, that Christians believed that three are one, and one is three, shows only the thoughtlessness of those who raise it. The Christian doctrine does not assert that one Divine Essence is Three Divine Essences, and Three Persons are One Person. The unity is predicated of the Essence, the Trinity of the Personality. But in this there is no contradiction, as such can only exist when one and the same predicate is at the same moment affirmed and denied of one and the same subject, and under the same aspect.

It is, however, very thoughtless to credit Christians, and among them so many illustrious thinkers, with so little understanding. Christians are not so rash as to think of trying to comprehend God's inmost Essence and Life. They are aware that we really do not comprehend entirely the inmost essence of any single thing. All nature is full of mysteries. What is matter, force, light, electricity, attraction? Their inmost essence is unknown to us, and yet we do not deny their existence and their activity. How much more must the Creator of all things exceed all our conceptions! A God, Whom we could fully comprehend, were less than ourselves. We think rightly of Him only when we recognize and confess that He infinitely transcends all our powers of comprehension. But without attempting to solve the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and give positive proofs

of it from reason alone, great theologians, like St. Augustine, St. Hilary, St. Thomas Aquinas, and many others, have not only victoriously defended it against the attacks of various heretical teachers, but also, starting from the Essence and inmost Life of the Godhead, have brought it nearer to the human mind, and made it acceptable for our understanding.

It would be foreign to the purpose of this treatise to go deeper into this topic. But one thing will probably be sufficient for every reasonable man. We know, namely, that the human soul is created after the image of God. As creature it can be only a highly imperfect copy of its Creator, and for this reason we must not institute a complete comparison between it and God, but must remain content with a similarity which may at the most be compared with that between our living body and its shadow. Now our soul is in its essence simple and indivisible, and yet understanding and will subsist in it. The understanding is not the will, the acts of the understanding are not those of the will, and *vice versâ*. Opposed to each other, they are really distinct from each other, and yet they belong to the one simple and indivisible human soul. Infinitely higher, it is true, is the mystery of the Eternal and unchangeable Godhead, in which nothing is accidental, nothing is transitory; but from its imperfect copy it may be at least seen that in spiritual beings the most rigid unity and indivisibility in one relation do not necessarily exclude plurality in another. The dogma

of the Holy Trinity, therefore, does not involve any contradiction in itself, and is not impossible. If Christ then teaches it, there is no reason for rejecting His testimony; it may be true; and if the Godhead of Christ is proved, His doctrine is undoubtedly true.

2. *The Incarnation of the Son of God.*—Christ, one and the same, calls Himself Son of God and Son of Man, very God and very Man alike. How is this to be understood? Has the Divine Essence passed into the human, or *vice versâ?* Impossible; for the Godhead is unchangeable, imperishable, and finite human nature cannot become infinite; and in any case Christ would still be mere God or mere man. Are the Divine and Human Natures so combined with each other that a third has arisen from them? Impossible; for two spiritual substances cannot be united or commingled so as to form one, and the infinite Godhead can never become part of a larger whole. In this case Christ would be neither God nor Man, but an unnameable *tertium quid.* Is there perhaps a double Christ, the one Man, the other God, but united with each other by love and friendship? Impossible; for even the closest friendship, which can only subsist between at least two persons, does not abolish the personality of the friends, and Christ, Who walked on earth as Man, appropriates in His own Person what is human, as well as all that is Divine.

We must accordingly understand the testimony of Christ as it has been explained in different passages

of Holy Writ, and more minutely in the teaching of the Church against various heretics. That is to say, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, without suffering any change in His Godhead, through the omnipotence of Divine Love, which created the first man, took in the womb of the pure Virgin, as beseemed God, without a human father, a human body and human soul, so that He could say, "This body is My body, this soul is My soul." Thus His Divine Personality was possessor of the Divine and Human Natures; He was true God and true Man in one Person.

Now, is the appropriation of human nature by a Divine Person perchance impossible? Who would maintain it to be so? This union, because it is unique of its kind, cannot be explained and made comprehensible by any other perfectly similar one, and therefore continues to be a mystery of faith. But, nevertheless, we find something similar to it in nature.

A plant, by its vital principle, is able to appropriate the juices of the earth, the component parts of the atmosphere, and impart its individuality to them; thus, too, an animal with regard to plants and elements, and man with regard to the whole of inferior nature. If, however, in the whole creation the higher is able to dominate the lower, and elevate it to itself, who will venture to assert that the Omnipotent Creator is unable to make human nature so His own, as to impart His Divine subsistence to it;

and thus one Divine Personality can possess and bear two natures, the Divine and the Human? Would such a union be unworthy of the Godhead? There is no dishonouring of the Godhead in this, for it remains unchanged; our humanity, however, is unspeakably elevated, nay, for a purpose which is perfectly worthy of a God that loves it infinitely, *i.e.*, the

3. *Redemption of the Human Race.*—We know how deep the human race had sunk before Christ came. In spite of the glorious revelation of God in creation, and the natural light of reason, the true God was forgotten, and the world filled with wretched and disgraceful idols, which were nothing but personifications and deifications of the debased desires of the human heart itself. If the human race were to be saved, was it not necessary that a supernatural revelation of God should take place? Was it not necessary that an authority, binding on all men, which could be only the authority of God Himself, should determine what was the only true religion? Was it not fit that God Himself, walking on earth as Man, should show to mankind how they should walk as men, *i.e.*, as the images of God, called to everlasting and blissful union with God?

But man's need of redemption lies much deeper. Mankind has always had the consciousness of being heavily indebted towards Eternal Justice, and of having a great debt to cancel. Accordingly we find among all peoples, who had not entirely lost the

moral sense, numerous and constantly repeated sacrifices, because it was felt that on earth there is no adequate sacrifice which could expunge the guilt.

And, as a matter of fact, what human being does not feel that he is a sinner, and has become forfeit to Divine Justice? "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This is true not merely of the original sin of the whole race, but also, in the case of every adult person, of numerous more or less grievous personal sins. Now, if a man has committed only a single grievous or deadly sin, in what position is he towards Eternal Justice? How large is his debt? A deadly sin is the transgression of a Divine commandment in an important matter, committed with full knowledge and full consent, a distinct opposing of the created will to the known will of the Creator—in reality, a rebellion against God. It belongs, however, to the nature of rebellion, that the rebel wants to destroy his lord as such in order to put himself or another in his place. The sinner withdraws from the authority of God, sets himself up as an independent being, and makes his own will the rule of what he does or does not. His act is an attempt to destroy God; I say an "attempt," because we are as little able to destroy God by our wickedness as to do Him good by our righteousness. But sin in itself is a violation of God's rights, an ignoring His Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness, which have given us the moral law, a mockery and contempt of His Majesty, because we prefer the petty object of

our evil desire to His love, His friendship, and the everlasting possession of Him. As truly as God is the highest and infinite Good, so truly is sin the greatest evil, in a certain respect an infinite debt.

Now, if man has burdened himself with a debt like this towards Eternal Justice, how is he to discharge it? Perhaps by sincere repentance of his sin. In any case, sincere repentance is an indispensable condition in order that God may forgive him his sin and take him into favour again; but it gives no right to forgiveness, it does not make good the wrong which has been committed. Is God to demand no satisfaction? We cannot prescribe to God what He has to do; He is the Lord. But would it be good for *us* if we could violate without punishment the moral law, on which not only our perfection, and consequently our eternal happiness, but also our temporal happiness and the whole order of society rest? Should we recognize adequately God's Holiness and Justice, which are as essential to Him as His Mercy and Goodness? Ought the sinner to cancel his debt by observing perfectly God's commandments and serving God perfectly after his conversion? But this he was bound to do already before he sinned, because he is God's creature, and therefore God's property in every respect. He has consequently no free property at his disposal with which he can annul his debt. For the rest, all the works of man, even his holiest, are of finite worth and dignity like himself; how then could they counter-

balance an infinite debt? Ought another and an innocent man to come to his assistance as security? But where is an innocent man to be found? Even the angels who remained pure cannot give satisfaction for the unhappy sinner. For they, too, like every creature are bound to offer themselves and all they have to God as their Creator, and all their merits have merely a finite and very limited value.

From Divine Justice, accordingly, the poor sinner has nothing else to expect than the eternal debtors'-prison. He, therefore, who does not believe in a Divine Redeemer may despair. But if a Divine Person assumed human nature He could suffer in it, and give His sufferings infinite value through His Divine Personality. But is this possible? In any case only to the infinite Love of God. Christ now declares * that the Heavenly Father has so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son for it, in order that the latter should sacrifice His life freely for us, and so we should have life—life in its fulness. In this way the wickedness of sin, the sanctity of the law, the infinite pity and love of God are revealed to the sinner in the most perfect way, and at the same time full satisfaction is paid to justice. Justice and Love embrace each other at the Cross of the God-Man Who dies voluntarily for the guilty. To the carnal Jew the Cross of Christ may be a stumbling-block, to the arrogant Pagan a piece of foolishness; one thing, however, is certain, that the true God, the

* St. John iii. 16.

Creator of Heaven and earth, has never been better known, never honoured more worthily, never loved more fervently, than since Christ as Redeemer of the world suffered death thereon.

To conclude, the three fundamental doctrines of Christianity contained in Christ's testimony are mysteries, it is true, but no impossibilities. The Trinity is the mystery of the Divine Being and Life, the Incarnation the mystery of Divine Omnipotence, the Redemption the mystery of Divine Love. Far from rendering Christ's testimony incredible, they bear unmistakeably the stamp of Divinity in themselves.

Human reason of itself can create only two kinds of doctrine—such as can be proved to be false or senseless when it goes wrong, or else purely reasonable, simply in harmony with reason, when it proceeds according to the correct laws of thought; above itself it cannot rise. But these three fundamental doctrines, in spite of all attempts in the course of eighteen centuries, have never been shown to be contrary to reason; on the other hand, they are not simply proportioned to human reason, since all those who hold them believe them as mysteries. They are, therefore, above reason, and accordingly not a human invention, but the revelation of a Spirit that has perfect knowledge of God's inmost Essence and Life, God's Omnipotence and Love, and this Spirit can be no other than God Himself.

Christ's testimony, then, is perfectly credible not only in itself, but also in its contents.

But is there nothing in Christ which could nevertheless make His testimony suspicious? In reply we shall look at Christ from every side—His history, His moral character, His system of doctrine, His acts. And it will be proved that all this does not only not throw suspicion on His testimony, but visibly confirms it.

History of Christ.

After the fall of our first parents God promised a Redeemer to our sinful race. He was to crush the head of the serpent—*i.e.* of Satan, the most powerful creature, and accordingly to be a Divine Person; He was to be a descendant of the woman,* and of the woman only, a God-Man, therefore, conceived of a Virgin. Such are the originally sketched characters of a picture in which, in the course of centuries, the numerous prophets who never met each other on earth, and accordingly never were in collusion with each other, who were sent and enlightened by God, painted the various features until the picture was completely finished. His genealogical tree is traced through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.† The

* Gen. iii. 15: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed." Isaias vii. 14: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel."

† Gen. xxii. 18: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxvi. 4 (to Isaac): "I will multiply thy seed like the stars of heaven, . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of

time of His coming is fixed—when the sceptre has departed from Judah,* after the expiry of the seventy year-weeks of Daniel,† but while the second Temple is still standing.‡ The place of His birth is to be Bethlehem.§ He is to announce a joyful message to the peoples, to work great miracles, and enter Jerusalem in triumph.‖ Nevertheless He is to be

the earth be blessed." Gen. xxviii. 14 (to Jacob): "And in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed." 2 Kings (2 Samuel) vii. 11, 14, 16 (to David): "And the Lord foretelleth to thee that the Lord will make thee a house. . . . I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son. . . . And thy house shall be faithful, and thy kingdom for ever before thy face, and thy throne shall be firm for ever."

* Gen. xlix. 10: "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations."

† Dan. ix. 24, 25: "Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, that transgression may be finished, . . . and the Saint of saints may be anointed. Know thou, therefore, and take notice: that from the going forth of the word, to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. . . . And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation."

‡ Aggeus ii. 8, 10: "And the desired of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

§ Micheas v. 2: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one amongst the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity." This prophecy quoted by the scribes and chief priests for Herod, St. Matt. ii. 5.

‖ Isaias lxi. 1: "He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives and

betrayed by one of His disciples,* and sold for thirty pieces of silver, which are then to be applied to the purchase of a potter's field ;† abandoned by His followers, accused before a tribunal, He shall not defend Himself.‡ When condemned He is to receive blows on the cheek and to be spat upon ; crucified between malefactors, mocked in His agony, and given gall and vinegar to drink ;§ His garments are to be divided and lots cast for them ;‖ He is to be pierced with a spear, buried in the grave of a rich man, and

deliverance to them that are shut up." Isaias xxxv. 6, 7 : "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free : for waters are broken out in the desert and streams in the wilderness." Zach. ix. 9 : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy King will come to thee, the just and Saviour : He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

* Psalm xl. 9 (A.V. Psalm xli.) : "For even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted, who eat my bread, hath greatly supplanted me."

† Zach. xi. 13 : "And the Lord said to me : Cast it to the statuary (*i.e.* the potter) a handsome price, that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver : and I cast them into the house of the Lord, to the statuary " (potter).

‡ Zach. xiii. 7 : "Strike the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." Isaias liii. 7 : "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth."

§ Psalm xxxiv. 15 : "Scourges were gathered together upon Me, and I knew not." Isaias l. 6 : "I have given My body to the strikers and My cheeks to them that plucked them. I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me." Isaias liii. 12 : "He hath delivered His Soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked." Psalm lxviii. 22 (A.V. lxix. 21) : "And they gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink."

‖ Psalm xxi. 19 (A.V. xxii. 18) : "They parted My garments amongst them : and upon My vesture they cast lots."

godless men shall be set as a watch at His tomb.* He shall nevertheless rise again, and because He has given His life for the sins of His people He shall have a numerous posterity, give a new law, and establish a kingdom in the knowledge of the true God, which shall embrace the earth.†

Must not he who looks at this picture and knows the story of Christ's Life as it is preserved in the consciousness of mankind and written in the books of the New Testament—must not he say to himself, the picture drawn by the Prophets so long ago, is evidently the picture of Christ? Christ is, therefore, the God-Man promised by God as Redeemer of the world.

The writer of these lines is quite well acquainted with the usual objection of the rationalists to this proof. He regrets the amount of time which he has expended on their writings. These gentlemen for a long period have been occupying themselves chiefly with criticism and hypercriticism of the Bible. To them the genuineness, the intactness, the truthfulness, not to mention the Divine inspiration, of most, if

* Zach. xii. 10: "They shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced." Isaias liii. 9: "And He shall give the ungodly for His burial and the rich for His death" (A.V. "He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death").

† Psalm xv. 10: "Thou wilt not leave My Soul in Hell: nor wilt Thou give Thy Holy One to see corruption." Isaias liii. 10, 12: "If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed. . . . Therefore will I distribute to Him very many, and He shall divide the spoils of the strong." Isaias lv. 4: "Behold I have given Him for a witness to the people, for a leader and a master to the Gentiles."

not of all the sacred books of the Old and New Covenants are at least doubtful. To not a few of them the Bible is a collection of fables, Christ a myth.

What is the object of all those quibbles, which pretend to be so learned, regarding the books of the Old Covenant? They seek to deprive these books of their prophetical character and consequently of their Divine authority. Useless labour! The authenticity, essential intactness, and truthfulness, as well as the Divine inspiration of these books is guaranteed by the authority of the Jews. For the people of Israel these books were both a religious and political law. The law was a heavy yoke, which was only borne because it had been imposed by God, and even then with constant resistance; and these books were always guaranteed by Israel, and many preferred sacrificing their lives to giving up these sacred books to Antiochus for destruction. What value have all the airy theories of modern and most inconsequential criticism against such brilliant testimony? As is known, the Christians for eighteen centuries have appealed to these books against the Jews themselves, and the Jews, even to-day, uphold their undiminished authority. What use is there of criticism and hypercriticism in this case?

No critic has yet ventured to deny the world-known fact, that those books from which we Christians prove the Messianic dignity of Jesus Christ, existed three hundred years before Christ, not only in the

original Hebrew text, but also in a Greek translation in the hands of Pagans. The prophecies, accordingly, which are contained in those books and have been undeniably fulfilled in Christ, were written at least three centuries before Christ. Can they come from any other source than God? Are not these books therefore Divine, and accordingly genuine and truthful? What is the use, then, of all the quibbling of critics? *

They ill-treat the Gospels as they do the books of the Old Covenant. One rejects one Gospel, another another. To what purpose if only one must be allowed to be valid? And if they tried to criticize away all the four Gospels, of what use would it be if only the Epistles of St. Paul were admitted to be genuine? And if the whole New Testament were rejected, would any good come of that? The history of Christ would remain fixed in the consciousness

* It is agreed by all reasonable critics that the Septuagint Translation from the Hebrew was commenced at Alexandria about the beginning of the third century B.C., "in the time of the earlier Ptolemies, about 280 B.C." (Smith's *Dictionary of Bible*, Art. "Septuagint;" Cornely, *Historica et Critica Introductio*, i. p. 323). At first the Law, or Pentateuch, only was translated: the other parts being added after a considerable interval, and the Prophets "nearly one hundred years after the Pentateuch" (Smith, *Dict.;* Cornely, i. p. 326). But the argument above is really of equal force whether the Alexandrian translation of the Prophets were made in the beginning of the third or the beginning of the second century B.C., as it is just as impossible, humanly speaking, to predict two hundred years in advance as three hundred years. It must always be remembered that the mere fact of such a translation proves of itself a long-established recognition of the authority of the book translated, and thus takes us back an indefinite period into the past.—E.

of the whole race, namely, that Christ was crucified because He affirmed that He was God and Redeemer of the world, and our proof of His Godhead, deduced from this, would accordingly stand fast. Christianity would, nevertheless, have existed for eighteen hundred years, dominating the history of the world, and evidently not without a basis, which can be none other than the Godhead of its Founder; for no man who has any respect for himself can call himself a Christian without believing in the Godhead of Christ.

The Moral Character of Christ.

We stand here before a subject to which we hardly venture to raise our eyes. Which of the numberless Christian writers, who have written with such intense love, such enthusiastic admiration, about Christ, has ever presumed to think that he could give us a complete picture of Christ's moral character? As no painter, no sculptor, ever succeeded in rendering Christ's human form in a satisfactory manner, so there has never been found an orator or poet who could depict Christ's spiritual lineaments. Christianity has undoubtedly produced many great and admirable saints, but even the greatest among them —what are they but feeble copies of Christ? As the most brilliant stars grow pale before the sun, so every other holiness disappears before Christ. Of Him alone in the history of the world it can be said that He did all things well, that every one of His

acts was marked with well-doing. He alone could step before His fiercest enemies and ask them: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" With cunning wickedness His enemies seek for false witnesses against Him, but He is on the whole earth the only one condemned to death of whom His judge declares publicly: "I find no fault in Him." *

He stands before the eyes of men, kind and gentle without weakness, zealous for truth and right without intolerance, firm and steadfast without stubbornness, humble and modest without servility, patient and devoted without weariness, without harshness. How condescending He is to the little ones, to the weak, the poor, the suffering, the unhappy sinners! With what force He stands up against the arrogance of the powerful! With what decision He unmasks the proud hypocritical Pharisees! What logic, what equability in all His actions! What wisdom in all His answers! How He puts to shame all the cunning of all His adversaries! And when we regard His Passion and Death, does He appear to us as a mere man? If God should walk on earth in a human form, could He manifest Himself to us more fitly than in Christ?

But what is the use of discoursing further as to the moral character of Christ? His enemies agree perfectly with us in this. They deny His Godhead, and nevertheless confess that they are His admirers, His followers, His disciples, on account of His

* St. John viii. 46, and xviii. 38.

wisdom and holiness. To them, though only a Man, He is the Great Sage of Nazareth, the Mighty Reformer, the greatest Benefactor of mankind, the wisest and holiest of men. To cite only one of them, David Strauss, who has written so much against the Godhead of Christ, says, that though His Godhead may be denied, "yet the first place remains reserved for Him in the temple of genius and humanity, as the unattainable ideal of moral greatness which can never be excelled."

But if this be the case, then I must ask, was Christ so morally depraved as to usurp the attributes of the Godhead, or so mentally deluded as to imagine that He was God?

The Teaching of Christ.

This consists of religious and moral teaching. To praise the morality of the Gospel is superfluous; for those who consider Christ to have been a mere man, place it unconditionally above the teachings of all sages, and adduce as their reason for calling themselves Christians simply the purity, sublimity, holiness, and benevolence of His ethical doctrine. Every one admits gladly that if mankind observed perfectly the morality of the Gospel, nothing would be wanting to perfect human nature and human happiness.

The case is different with the religious teaching of Christianity—it is against this that all attacks are

directed. Why? For two reasons. It contains, as we have seen, dogmas which exceed the power of human comprehension. Now, if a man is proud and presumptuous and, we may add, foolish enough to make his power of comprehension the final measure of truth, he must turn away with disdain from the mysteries of Christian faith. To the arrogance which does not recognize the authority of God Himself, there is naturally coupled the depravity of the heart which will not accept Christian belief in order not to be obliged to live in a Christian way. All hymns of praise which the deniers of Christ's Godhead offer to His moral teaching are more or less tainted with hypocrisy. They desire to appear as morally earnest men, and repel any suspicion that they attack the Christian faith from fear of its practical consequences. Nevertheless, it remains true that the one great unspoken reason for wanting to make a breach in the *Credo* is, that the Decalogue is entrenched behind it. In all departments of human knowledge there are unsolved questions—mysteries. These are readily allowed to exist, and why? Because they bring no unpleasant consequences with them; one can live afterwards as before, just as he wishes. If, however, the Christian dogmatic teaching is true, then the holy, rigid moral teaching of Christianity is also a rigidly binding law in all its parts, a law on which an eternity presses as sanction with its infinite weight.

Considering the depravity of the human heart,

it is therefore not at all surprising that Christ, with His divinely pure and holy teaching, is the target of perpetual contradiction. If it depended on the wishes of our foolish hearts, we would all rather be Pagans than Christians. Christianity must conquer every human heart, and in doing so it must employ no other weapon than conviction, because every other power would disgrace Christianity itself and merely produce hypocrites. Now, though Christianity may convince our reason, yet our heart still remains foolish; "We see and approve the better things, we follow the worse." The heart is a skilful sophist. How many objections and suggestions it can supply to the understanding, how much dust it can raise to dim its sight! How often it happens that a powerful mind, as slave to a foolish heart, labours at the most wretched work! Take away this work out of the literature of eighteen Christian centuries, and what anti-Christian writings will remain? The saints have written nothing against Christianity. But, in the service of sin, human understanding has done everything possible in attacking Christ's doctrines. In the great edifice there is not a single square inch against which all kinds of battering-rams have not been brought to bear. And with what perseverance! A thousand times repelled, the attack is ever repeated anew. Immemorial possession ensures his property to every man. Christianity has been in possession for eighteen centuries. No heed is paid to this. For eighteen centuries Christianity has

accredited itself before mankind and shown its title-deeds. This has no value. Every stranger that meets it in this world, demands its papers and disputes with it about every possible point. But Christianity has never failed to meet inquiry and give a reply. Its enemies have all passed away and disappeared; it alone remains.

Weak minds are apt to be misled by these constant attacks on Christianity, and think that perhaps everything is not as it should be, otherwise it would not meet with such constant opposition. Just the contrary is true. A fortress is besieged and bombarded only so long as it remains firm and defends itself vigorously; if an adequate breach has been made, an entrance is effected at that point, and the siege comes to an end. But how large need the breach be to entail a surrender of the Christian fortress? As small as is conceivable. Let it be clearly proved to us Christians that a single doctrine of Christ's is false, we should then be ready to surrender the whole fortress, because we could no longer believe in the Godhead of Christ.

But is not He Who creates what is eternal and indestructible more than a man? We need not be astonished that Mohammedanism exists so long, for in the first place it is the religion of the flesh, and secondly, it impales its critics, and, moreover, what truth it does contain belongs to Christianity. Just as little can we be surprised at the continuance of Paganism. So long as there are men who serve

their passions rather than God, there will be Pagans. Christianity, however, is the religion of the Cross.

If it is to be recognized openly as God's work by its durability, then let it be compared with the philosophical systems of the sublimest sages of all lands and times. What else is the history of philosophy than a kind of camera obscura, in which one system after the other is unfolded, in which the succeeding one always controverts and upsets its predecessor? To point to the latest period in Germany alone—with what enthusiasm the philosophy of Kant was received! Kant was still alive, and whoever did not hold to Fichte was no friend of progress; Fichte was still alive, and no one could be considered an educated man who did not throw himself, body and soul, into Hegel's arms; soon afterwards, Schelling succeeded in creating a powerful competition with Hegel. These thinkers, however, succeeded together in bringing philosophy for some time into such discredit, that unfortunately many would not hear of such a thing as philosophical study. The philosophical systems of the sublimest minds are as perishable as their authors; only the truth out of God's mouth remains for ever.

It alone, too, brings fruit for mankind; it alone is the Word of Life. If we take the teachings of Plato and of Aristotle, which far surpass all other philosophical systems and still excite just admiration, how much, may we ask, have they contributed to the moral reformation of mankind? How beautiful,

how sublime are Plato's utterances about the Deity! But was he able to convert, not his nation, but even a village, a single family, from the worship of the most disgraceful idols to the worship of the One True God? How eloquently do Socrates, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius speak regarding all the virtues and duties of man! Were they able to raise their people, or even their own families (not to speak of themselves), from the deepest moral depravity? How totally different are Christ and His teaching! He does not appear as a philosopher who has studied long in the schools; His discourses have no touch of profound "philosophic" wisdom. How simple, how free from all claim to superiority they are! But how straight and deeply they go into the heart! How clearly they bear the stamp of truth in themselves! How comforting and consoling they are! He speaks like one Who is perfectly conscious of His authority, not only like one to Whom the mind and heart of man are perfectly known, but also like one to Whom they belong. He does not discuss and dispute, He affirms. In order to propagate His teaching, He does not select the sages of Rome and Athens, but poor and ignorant fishermen, in order that our faith may be built not on human wisdom and the art of scientific persuasion, but on the power of God. And He and His ignorant Apostles have succeeded in doing that wherein all philosophers had failed. Every man, however depraved he may have been, every

people, however deep they may have fallen, have been sanctified when they adopted Christianity. Christ has succeeded in binding men so fast to His doctrine that millions have shed their blood for it, and (what is infinitely more) myriads have worshipped a crucified Man as their God and Redeemer, for His sake have combated all their passions heroically as long as they lived, and died consoled and happy through their hope in Him. Christ's teaching is at once what men have loved most deeply and hated most deeply. To friends and foes, however it has done only good.

Here now comes the question: Whence had Christ this teaching of His? When He taught for the first time in the synagogue, His fellow-citizens asked Him from whence He had got His wisdom, as He had not studied in any school. "Never did man speak like this Man." Up till now, this question has remained unanswered by all those who do not believe in the Godhead of Christ. For who was the teacher of Christ on earth? Who taught Christianity before Christ? In His own country He could have heard only Pharisees and Sadducees, *i.e.*, Epicureans and Materialists; the schools of foreign countries He did not visit in any case, as was known by His fellow-citizens, who saw Him only at work in the workshop of His Foster-father; and even had this been the case, could He have learned Christianity in Athens or Rome? Was His doctrine in the air, as the phrase is? Did Christ give expression only

to the thoughts of His contemporaries, to the Zeit-Geist, the spirit of the time? How did it happen, then, that His teaching found such a terrible resistance among Jews and Pagans, that for three centuries the axe was blunting itself on the necks of His followers? Christ stands alone on earth with His teaching, and in reply to the question, Whence had He such holy, humane, indestructible, and saving doctrine, there is even to-day no other satisfactory answer than that which He Himself gave, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself."*

The Miracles of Christ.

At the word "miracle" many of our contemporaries think they must smile compassionately, in order to appear very enlightened and not at all superstitious. And yet it is very curious that people just in our times are so greedy of miracles, so credulous and superstitious! How many remains of Pagan superstitions do we find even in our "illuminated" Northern Germany! Who can enumerate them? How many evil or good prognostics are there which make illuminated persons tremble or rejoice? To which day of the week is not good or ill-luck attached? What highly educated person likes to make the thirteenth at table? Is it not terrible when

* St. John vii. 16, 17.

spoon and fork come to lie across each other, or the salt-cellar is upset? What luck is to be expected when one meets a flock of sheep early in the morning? How unfortunate when one chances to encounter a drove of pigs! Not satisfied with this and endless rubbish of a similar kind, derived from an antique superstition, our illuminated age has made a regular irruption by force into the realm of the miraculous, the wonders of Satan and charlatanism. Sympathy, artificial somnambulism, table-turning, spirit-rapping, table-writing, psychography and necromancy, are the miracles after which our age has been running and still runs. But God must not work any miracles; that would be unendurable for our science. The most highly illuminated people, the rationalists, declare roundly that the books of the Old and New Covenants tell us of miracles which God is said to have worked; but the science of to-day on its pinnacle cannot admit the possibility of miracles; these books are, therefore, in plain English, a collection of myths or fables. The proof on which the whole system of both rationalists and mythologists is constructed is in any case a very concise one. Our science declares from its lofty heights that God can work no miracles, therefore the Bible is a book of fables, and that ends the matter.

Most learned gentlemen! Will you allow me to enter a slight objection? Jean Jacques Rousseau, the great Genevese, says in his *Emile:* "If a man were seriously to raise the question whether God

can work miracles, we should show him far too much honour by answering him in earnest; it would be sufficient to order a place for him in the lunatic asylum." This is a rude answer; we shall deal more politely with you.

If a block of stone, a genuine block of stone, were at once to put forth genuine leaves, blossoms and fruit, that would certainly astonish you. But you are not at all astonished that a tree does so. If, however, a tree, in your garden were to lift its roots out of the earth and walk about, you would certainly shake your head at this. But you are not at all surprised that your dog walks about with you. If a monkey wrote a big book to prove that his ancestors had been men and learned professors, and were now to intimate that he intended shortly taking his degree at this or the other university, you would doubtless open your eyes. You, however, are as little astonished as I am, when certain men write whole volumes only to asseverate that they are unable to find any essential difference between themselves and monkeys, especially the largest ones. You recognize accordingly a relative supernaturalism between the different kingdoms of nature. What is quite natural for the plant is supernatural for the stone; what exceeds the plant's nature may be perfectly suitable to the animal's, and a man can quite naturally effect much that is totally beyond the powers of all inferior beings. Is man then the pinnacle of Being, the highest existence? If there

is a God, does it not belong to His nature that He should be able to do much which transcends all powers of created nature? To deny the possibility of miracles means accordingly nothing else than to deny the existence of God, and that is not quite overpoweringly scientific. If, however, there is a God, then real miracles are possible, and if the Bible tells us of miracles, it is not *therefore* a book of fables; and thus the whole of rationalism and mythologism is left baseless, floating in mid-air. Or will you, like the King in the French couplet, forbid the Almighty to work miracles?

Miracles, it is said, would overthrow the laws, the order of nature. Nonsense! If Christ heals a sick man with a word, has medicine no more significance? If Christ awakens Lazarus from the dead, must we be afraid that our forefathers will arise and demand their property back from us? If Christ multiplies a few loaves in His hands to feed thousands, do we need to sow no more corn? God by His miracles, does not overthrow the laws given by Him to nature. Nature works by its powers received from the Creator, and thereby follows the order imposed on it. God, however, works when it pleases Him, as Lord of nature, immediately and without intervention of natural forces, either what He usually accomplishes through their means, or even some higher object, to which no natural forces are adequate. Thus the Creator usually heals diseases by means of the powers which He has conferred on nature, in extra-

ordinary cases, however, immediately through His own power. On the other hand, He has not conferred on natural forces the power of awakening a dead man to life; this can be done by Him alone Who is Lord of life and death.

Now, cannot there be reasons that God should work miracles exceptionally? It is said that nature is everywhere adequate. But is this quite unconditionally true? And even if it were the case, would it not be admissible that God should work miracles in order to show men that He is Lord of nature? From the regular course of nature many have already wished to show that there is no God and no Divine government of the world, but that all is conducted by blind, fatal, necessary laws of eternal matter. A single miracle upsets atheism, pantheism, and naturalism.

It is asserted that the book of nature reveals God sufficiently. No doubt. And yet there have been and still are men who in this splendid book have found no God, or even countless gods. Whither have the human heart and understanding not wandered? Nations which in other matters were so wise—Phœnicians, Egyptians, Chaldees, Greeks and Romans—how foolish they were in their religion! When man himself sinks beneath nature and withstands nature, can nature help him then? A man can tear out his eyes, can put an end to his life, but can nature then restore his eyesight or his life? Now, in the moral nature of man, his proper relation to God,

his Creator and Lord, is as natural and suitable as his face to his body; if he has lost it, he cannot restore it to himself; if he has wrought his own spiritual death, he cannot awaken himself again. If man has sunk beneath nature, it is only God Who can raise him again. This, however, can be effected only by a supernatural intervention on the part of God. This intervention of God, which in itself is the greatest miracle of His goodness, must nevertheless be perceptible to man, because he has to accept it as a free being and co-operate with it. It must, therefore, be accompanied by visible miracles which mark it as Divine.

If God, therefore, willed to reveal the true religion to mankind, who had wandered so far astray, and desired to fix precisely their position towards Himself, it was not only necessary for Him to make it recognizable as such in the eyes of those to whom His revelation was immediately sent, but He was obliged to impress the seal of Divine actions on these persons also, and accredit them by the gift of miracles as His messengers before other men. God did so with Moses and the Prophets; Christ did so with His Apostles, after He had shown that He Himself was God.

From what has been said, it is incontrovertibly clear, that miracles on the part of God are both physically and morally possible. If any one speaks, then, of a miracle having occurred, a reasonable man inquires into two things only: first, has the act, which

is asserted to be a miracle, really happened? and secondly, if it has really happened, is it of such a kind that it can be ascribed only to the supernatural intervention of God, *i.e.*, is it a true miracle? Now, what are we to think of Christ's miracles? Did He really work miracles, genuine and Divine ones? The books of the New Testament admit of no doubt as to this ; but we appeal to the testimony and judgment of Christ's enemies themselves, which can be rejected by no reasonable man. Jews and Pagans had the greatest interest in denying the miracles of Christ, or in depriving them of all convincing power, in order to escape accepting that Christianity which they hated. Have they, nay, have the most cultivated among them denied the historical truth of Christ's miracles or tried to explain them naturally? None of them. When the news was spread that Christ had raised Lazarus from the dead, the people went in crowds to Bethany to see not only Jesus, but also Lazarus. The High Priest assembled the Council and said, "What shall we do? This Man works many miracles, and if we allow this to be continued the whole people will join Him."* None of the Council thought of proposing that they should gather the people together and say to them that Christ had worked no miracles, nay, had done nothing wonderful. Why? To step before thousands and hundreds of thousands, and tell them, "What you all have seen, has never happened," would be the same as trying

* St. John xi. 47.

to argue away the sun at noonday. How could the thousands, who had themselves been objects of Christ's miracles, be convinced that they had never been diseased or that they were not yet healed? Nobody ventured to deny the miraculous deeds of Christ. Did any one, perhaps, try to explain them in a natural way? Even this was not proposed by any one in the Council. Why? Because whoever had wished to give the people a natural explanation of Christ's miracles, would have been obliged to perform them under the same conditions and with the same means. For when a teacher of physics has explained a natural phenomenon from its cause, he makes an experiment and produces the same phenomenon artificially, in order to prove that his explanation is true and adequate. No one, however, in the Council was bold enough to imitate the miracles of Christ. And as the most concise answer to these miracles, the most sapient Council resolved that Christ should be crucified, and that Lazarus, who had been raised, should again be put to death.

Another attempt, it is true, had been made to deprive Christ's miracles of their convincing power, by ascribing them to Beelzebub. But even in this blasphemy they gave some testimony to the truth. They did not ascribe them to the first stray devil; Christ's miracles were of such a kind that they could be imputed only to the Prince of Devils. An explanation given by the later Jews in their writings after much ripe meditation is somewhat nearer the truth

namely, that Christ had slipped secretly into the Holy of Holies in the Temple and discovered there the right pronunciation of Jehovah's sacred name, and by speaking this word correctly had worked the miracles.

And what judgment was formed as to the miracles of Christ by Pagans, by the most cultured among them, such as the philosophers Celsus, Porphyrius, Jamblichus, Hierocles, and Julian the Apostate? None of them denied the historical truth of the miracles, or attempted to explain them naturally. They all contented themselves with asserting that Christ had performed them by magic, by the black art.

Such is the judgment of learned men among the most violent enemies of Christ. Perhaps it will be said that this was the judgment of a dark and ignorant time. Wait a moment! It is not good taste for a man to think that sound human understanding came in his person for the first time into the world. And what else does one really require than sound human understanding, in order to judge of miracles? Is it not enough to know for a certainty that a man was even born blind and has now received his sight, that another who had been dead for four days and buried, emitting an odour of corruption, afterwards went about perfectly well? How did the transition from blindness to seeing, from death to life, take place? You are told that the blind man received his sight when Christ anointed his eyes with

clay; the dead man came out of the grave when Christ called to him, "Lazarus, come forth!" It is left to your sound human understanding to decide as to whether the causes of these transitions were natural, *i.e.*, naturally adapted to their effects.

For the rest, the history of Christ falls within a period which was perfectly enlightened and highly cultured, the age of the first two Roman Emperors, which only a very ignorant person could call ignorant. All educated men consider it the golden age of arts and sciences, the masterpieces of which are still regarded as such and as unsurpassed models. Such then was the judgment as to the miracles of Christ among the most learned Jews and Pagans of that time.

But if any man will not acknowledge the miracles of Christ and consequently His Godhead, will he explain to us how the world came to worship a crucified Jew as its God, to set its hopes on Him alone, and to accept the religion of the Cross and live and die for it? If that has taken place without miracles, then it is an infinitely greater miracle than all others together. The moral miracles of Christianity cannot be denied—why is it sought to deny the physical ones? Is it because these latter are more difficult to perform? Does God find less resistance in the free and perverse will of man than in irresponsible soulless nature? As the corporeal world is only a shadow of the spiritual one, so the physical miracles are only a shadow of the moral ones, and considering human

nature as it is at present, moral miracles can only be explained by previous physical ones.

But, it is argued, at the present day there are no more miracles. Probably, because God is afraid of our culture and scientific spirit? Or because we know to-day the secret powers and laws of nature, the effects of which were once regarded as miracles? I do not think so.

It is not true that there are no more miracles in our times. Christ gave His Church the gift of miracles, and the history of all Christian centuries testifies that, as there were always great saints, so there were always persons with miraculous power. But that miracles do not happen every day follows from our conception of them; that they are not so frequent in the latter times of Christianity as at its foundation, is evident from their purpose. Their object was to accredit Christ, His Apostles, and Christianity before the world; these credentials preserve the whole of their original value so long as they are transmitted to us by authentic history. Gregory the Great said rightly, "Miracles were necessary in founding the Christian Church, in order that faith should strike root in the hearts of men. Thus we water a newly-planted tree, but as soon as it has firmly fixed its roots we cease to water it." That miracles are not performed to satisfy a vain curiosity will be found comprehensible by every reasonable person. Christ had miracles for all those who needed them and who trusted to Him in faith, but none for godless, frivolous

Herod. When poor Renan blasphemously summons God before a committee of men like himself in order that He may experiment like a sleight-of-hand performer, one can only shrug one's shoulders in compassion at the arrogant wiseacre and proceed on one's way.

But has not our age made so much progress, particularly in natural science, that for it there can be no more miracles, and that for Christ's miracles a natural explanation can be found? That would depend on the success of the attempt. The attempt has been already made, and with a pitiable result. The miraculous stories were taken out of the Bible; the essential circumstances were cut out of the Biblical narrative and others were added, unknown in the original; and after that had been altered in the story which made a miracle of the fact, the miracle was really explained quite naturally! An admirable piece of work! But a stop was soon put to the doings of these acute critics by calling out to them, "You must either take the Bible for a credible book, and consequently receive its reports as they are, or you must consider it as a volume which makes a miraculous travesty of the most natural things in the world, and then what does the Bible matter to you?" This maltreatment of the Bible was so well castigated by Strauss in his *Leben Jesu*, that no theologian has since had courage to give a natural explanation of the Biblical miracles. This part of Strauss' work has done infinitely more good than the other has done harm.

With the Bible in hand, therefore, even at the present day, we are ready to appear before all universities, all critics of the nineteenth century, and challenge them to pick out from among all the miracles, which are related as such in Holy Writ, the apparently simplest one, and explain it to us naturally. But under two reasonable conditions: in the first place they must not add to or take away anything from the Biblical narrative, and secondly, after giving their explanation, they must make the experiment and repeat the miracle in exactly the same circumstances and with the means stated. They will be careful not to attempt it.

Are we acquainted to-day with the natural laws and powers which were unknown to the contemporaries of Christ, by means of which, with one word, a Man healed the worst diseases and awakened the dead to life? Do our physicians possess the secret of expelling all ailments by imposition of hands or by simple command? Can our ships' captains enforce obedience from the sea and the winds by a word or a gesture? Can we multiply the bread in our hands so as to satisfy thousands?

What was a miracle at the time of Christ is so still, and will always remain so; for the powers of nature and the omnipotence of the Creator will always be equi-distant from each other.

In order to escape the convincing force of miracles, people take refuge in the darkness of ignorance; they stick their heads in the sand so as

not to see. In any case, it is urged, no sufficient natural explanation of the so-called miracles has been hitherto given, but we are not yet acquainted with all the forces and laws of nature; one day those secret laws may be discovered and the miracles thus meet with their natural explanation. How curious! It is assumed that there are secret natural laws which are diametrically opposed to the known ones. Why, then one law cancels the other; in that case there are no natural laws, no order, no natural certainty. One law of nature, *e.g.*, has for a result that clay rubbed in the eyes of a seeing man does him harm, nay, makes him blind, and another natural law has for a result that clay restores the sight of a blind man.

And these natural laws which produce miracles and were hitherto unknown to all learned men, were nevertheless familiar to all those who worked miracles, because they worked by their means. Moses died more than three thousand years ago; the Prophets, Christ, and His Apostles quitted this world's stage long ago; these and many others who worked miracles were acquainted with those secret natural forces and laws, although living in dark and ignorant times; and you, highly cultured child of the nineteenth century, you do not know them yet! These miracle-workers must at any rate have been wonderfully illuminated men. It is still more curious that those hidden laws, which being natural must be things permanent and in constant operation like

the other laws of nature, as a matter of fact never enter into action except when they are set in motion by a miracle-worker. You can, *e.g.*, call a thousand times with all your power into the grave of your deceased mother, "Mother! come forth!" In vain, for the natural law with which you are acquainted, holds fast its prey. But when Christ appeals to the natural law with which you are not acquainted and calls into the grave of Lazarus, "Come forth!" the dead man arises quite naturally. Do you believe that? If so, then you are infinitely more credulous than I, who believe in the real miracles.

To conclude: the historical and philosophical truth of Christ's miracles cannot be denied. But while the Apostles and Saints worked their miracles in Christ's name, Christ worked His by His own fulness of power, in all the kingdoms of nature. He has, therefore, proved Himself to be God, the Lord of all creatures, and could say, "If ye do not believe My words, then believe My works, for these give testimony of Me."*

When the Jews in their fearful wickedness and blindness ascribed to Beelzebub what were evidently Divine miracles, Christ promised them a miracle, which in any case they could only ascribe to the Godhead, to Him Who alone is Lord of life and death, namely, His Resurrection from the dead on the third day. The confidence which allows everything to depend on a proof like this, is unique in the history

* St. John x. 38; v. 36.

of the world. On the one hand, a dead man can employ no more artifices in order to deceive his fellow-creatures; and on the other hand, if he does not give the promised proof, his whole undertaking is wrecked for ever, and he himself remains branded with everlasting shame and disgrace in the history of the world. If Christ, however, really arose from the dead, who can any longer doubt His Godhead, which He claimed for Himself on oath before the tribunal? An inquiry into the Resurrection of Christ is, therefore, of itself decisive with regard to Christ and Christianity, and we must accordingly conduct it with all possible thoroughness.

The Resurrection of Christ.

In the first place we must search for a firm, historical basis, which cannot be cut away from under our feet. Now, all parties, Christians, Jews, and Pagans, who are interested in the question, agree completely in two points; namely, that the Body of Christ, when it was taken down from the Cross, was laid in a tomb in a rock, and that on the third day after the interment it was no longer there. The interment and the disappearance of the Body are thus two facts which are admitted, nay, asserted on all sides. During the whole of our inquiry we must, therefore, always regard them as established.

There comes now the question, How did Christ's Body come out of the grave? Evidently only by

its own power or a power foreign to itself—a third possibility is inconceivable. But if by its own power, then there is a further question as to whether it happened by human and natural, or by Divine and supernatural agency. There are thus three conceivable explanations of that disappearance, which exhaust all possible hypotheses, and of which each has its advocates. The Jews assert that Christ's Body came out of the grave by foreign agency, namely, that of His disciples. The Pagans (I mean the modern ones, the rationalists) say that Christ was not dead, but only in a deep swoon; He recovered in the tomb and came forth by natural, human power. Christians maintain that by virtue of His Godhead Christ awakened His Humanity from death to life, and arose from the grave by His own Divine power. It must be remarked, that of these three assertions, which alone are possible, each formally excludes the others, and consequently that as the disappearance of the Body is maintained on all sides, if two have been evidently proved to be false, the third has been proved to be true in and for itself.

Let us now examine, to begin with, the latest assertion of the neo-Pagans, which was first set up in the eighth decade of the last century. They say that Christ was not dead, and therefore could not arise from the dead. Now, the question whether a man has died or not, is a matter of history. Such questions are not settled by arbitrary assertions or denials, but

by credible testimony which cannot be rejected. I now ask the neo-Pagans, "Have you credible witnesses or documents from the time of Christ, which show that Death on the Cross to be false which has been hitherto believed by the whole world? You will surely not refer me to that wretched piece of bungling called *Revelations as to the true Manner of Jesus' Death*, which reveals nothing else than the stupidity of its author, and the barefaced want of conscience with which poor and ignorant people are deprived of their faith. You are pleased, after eighteen centuries, to deny a fact which has stood fast till now, and think that that ends the matter. Hardly! You assert that Christ did not die on the Cross. Where, then, did He die? at what time? of what manner of death? Answer me! No answer. If the grave of Christ by Jerusalem, to which pilgrimages were made at all times, from the whole world, for which so much blood was shed, is not the only and true grave of Christ, where, then, is the other and true one? Again you give no answer to this so simple question. If in a lawsuit one of the parties were so unreasonable as to demean himself in this way before the judges, he would infallibly be turned out of the court, and meet with nothing but contempt and ridicule from the on-lookers. But these men are not concerned with the search for truth; it is enough for them if they can excite doubt, and confuse weak souls by bold denial or assertion. Although, therefore, their assertion is a purely arbitrary one and

consequently valueless, we shall, nevertheless, give positive proofs of its falsity.

The Death of Christ on the Cross is testified to, not only by the four Evangelists, but by all writers who have written about Christ; by Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans, and in the course of nearly eighteen centuries no one has ventured to maintain the contrary.

The reality of the Death is attested by the soldiers, who, when charged to break the legs of three crucified men, in order to hasten their death, executed the order on the two others, but not on Christ, because they saw that He was already dead. In order, however, to be secure against every possibility of deception, one of the soldiers pierced His Side with a spear, so that blood and water flowed from the wound. The wound was of such a kind, that unbelieving Thomas said, "Except I put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my *hand* into His Side, I will not believe."* The Protestant physicians, the brothers Gröne, when the hypothesis of the neo-Pagans was first suggested, published a thorough inquiry into this wound in the Side, and showed that death had previously taken place, and supposing it had not, must have ensued in consequence of it. And the real Death of Christ is proved by the Roman captain, who was officially instructed to put an end to Christ's life, and when questioned about it afterwards by his superiors, gave an official confirmation of the fact.†

* St. John xx. 25. † St. Mark xv. 44, 45.

The real Death of Christ is attested by His friends, namely, by Nicodemus, a teacher in Israel, and Joseph of Arimathea, a man of high repute, who took down Christ's Body from the Cross, and along with Mary, the Mother of Christ, John, the beloved disciple, and the pious women, prepared It for interment by cleansing It from the clotted blood, and embalming It according to Jewish rites, after which they buried It. All this could not be done without much handling and violent movement of the Sacred Body, which must have afforded sufficient evidence of death. The eyes of friends and a Mother are very quick when they are occupied with the burial of One so loved.

Christ's real Death is attested by His sworn enemies, who were empowered by Pilate to seal the grave, and did so, setting a watch.* They wished to ensure themselves against every possibility of deception; must they not then, above all, have required some certainty as to the fact of death having taken place?

Christ's Death is, therefore, attested on all sides by the most credible witnesses, so much so that we can boldly assert that no man's death in the history of the world is so undeniable as that of Christ, on the Cross, and as the neo-Pagans can give no other time or place or manner of death, they must assert that Christ never died at all, and tell us where He is, since He disappeared from the theatre of the world.

* St. Matt. xxvii. 66.

Their statement, however, is not only untrue, but also physically impossible. Christ's Body was buried after the Jewish manner. The arms were drawn rigidly down to the hips, and the whole Body then wrapped in linen, as is done at the present day with little children; the head was bound in a separate cloth. As a kind of substitute for Egyptian embalmment, a large quantity of strong ointments and spices (a hundred pounds, in the case of Christ) was rolled up with the Body. Let us now suppose a body in this condition to be laid in a cave in the rocks which affords only sufficient space for the interment of a man, and let it be closed with a heavy stone door. Even granting that the person buried is still alive, and suffering from no physical exhaustion, how is he to extricate himself, overturn the great stone door, and go away *without being noticed?* The author of the so-called "Revelations" makes the "brethren" come to Christ's help, Who was protected by the "brothers' lodge" at Jerusalem! As is known, they were possessed of extraordinary knowledge and secrets. To Christ, Who was only lying in a deep swoon in the grave, they gave a certain powder, not more closely specified for certain reasons, in order to awaken Him. The author adds very sapiently, "This powder is most effectual in the East." And this is the way in which history is written!

The Jews say: Christ was really dead, but His disciples stole the Body, and pretended that He had arisen from the dead. The Jews likewise maintain

here a fact—the removal of the Body by Christ's disciples. They, too, must bring forward their witnesses. Who are these witnesses? The soldiers who watched the grave. What is their evidence? "While we slept," they say, "the disciples came and took away the Body." What curious watchers! They sleep instead of watching, but, nevertheless, when asleep they see what takes place, and know quite exactly who the agents are. Other watchers would only have been able to say, "Before we slept (granting that watchers must sleep) the grave was closed and the Body still there; but when we awoke, the grave was empty and the Body gone." This evidence would have been admissible. But he who as a witness says more than he can know is clearly a liar. And he who appeals to sleeping witnesses is himself not quite awake. Thus has it been ordained by Divine Providence, that whoever attempts to escape from the truth must fall into the abyss of the ridiculous. The Jews *cannot* make use of any other but sleeping witnesses. If the watchers were to say, "While we watched, the disciples came," &c., the whole story would be spoiled. The evidence of the Jews is, therefore, formally inadmissible before any tribunal. But it is also in itself morally and physically impossible.

Morally: it presupposes in the Apostles quite another character than the world recognizes in them. They were simple, timid, honest people, incapable of such a transgression against God and men. And

what motive could they have had? If Christ did not really arise from the dead, then His whole undertaking and all His promises remained with Him in the grave; they were, more than all men, disgracefully deceived by Him, for Whom they had left everything. What could they wish to do with a dead body? To cheat the world? But can we suppose that the proclamation of Christ's teaching was a speculation that promised to pay? Did they not know what awaited them at the hands of Pagans as well as of Jews? In any case they came to know and experience it. They acted in that full consciousness to which expression was given by St. Paul when he wrote the words: "If Christ be not risen again then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain, and we are of all men most miserable."* As a fact, in this world there was nothing to expect but labour, toil, persecution, and death, and what was to be expected in the next?

But the evidence of the Jews is also materially, physically impossible. In order to plan such a deception on the whole world, the agreement of many persons and the deepest secrecy were necessary. Those who knew the state of matters were not arch-deceivers by profession, and among them we see several women also. History tells us that all these persons were savagely persecuted, and that almost all suffered death in the most fearful torments for preaching the Resurrection of Christ. And we

* 1 Cor. xv. 14, 19.

are to suppose that of all the companions in guilt not one betrayed the secret through talkativeness, or envy towards those preferred before him, or yet from avarice, or ambition, or fear of rack and death! And in sketching the plan reliance could be placed on this!

But let us come to the execution of the plan. The grave lay close to one of the gates of Jerusalem. It was Easter time, when every grown-up Israelite was obliged to appear at the festival of eight days. It was impossible for all the pilgrims to find accommodation in the town; the whole surrounding country was covered with their tents; there was a constant coming and going of the crowd. On account of the weapons then in use, every guard of soldiers consisted of at least four men. We know, *e.g.*, that Peter, when bound in prison, was guarded by sixteen soldiers.* We may certainly suppose that Christ's enemies had set a sufficient watch by His grave. We have now to imagine that the Apostles, who immediately fled when Christ was seized, and whose leader, the most courageous of all, denied Him at the word of a maid-servant: we have to imagine that for the sake of a dead man and to their own prejudice they undertook such a venture! And, moreover, that it succeeded!

Let us consider still further the way in which the Jews acted. According to their own statement, the guard had been guilty of a very great mis-

* Acts xii. 4.

demeanour. Was it punished? No. The Apostles, too, would have committed a crime incomparably greater than that for which Christ had been crucified. Were they punished for doing so? No. Were they at least compelled to restore the stolen Body? No. They openly accused the Jews and Pilate of murdering the Son of God and seduced thousands and thousands.* Was a stop put to their doings? No. The High Council satisfied itself with having the Apostles beaten with rods and forbidding them to speak of Christ to any man. How very mild!

The whole way in which the Jews acted shows that they did not believe in their own assertion They cannot, therefore, take it badly from our side when we also do not believe in it. Nevertheless their evidence is important for the present inquiry because it testifies to three weighty points: the real death of Christ, the watching of the tomb, and the disappearance of the Body. The Jews drive the neo-Pagans and the neo-Pagans drive the Jews out of the field. Accordingly as the disappearance of the Body from the grave is a fixed fact and can now be possible only in the way maintained by Christians, the Christians keep the field, and their evidence is to be accepted as true without further inquiry.

We shall nevertheless (though it is superfluous) make some additional remarks as to its internal credibility. Christ had promised His Resurrection. But so far as we know Christ, we must suppose He

* Acts ii. 23, iii. 13.

was aware that He could keep and would keep His word, otherwise He would have destroyed His reputation and His whole enterprise by such a purely gratuitous promise. In spite of that promise, however, it was only with the greatest pains that His disciples could be brought to believe in the real Resurrection. The first news of it was considered by them to be mad talk. When Christ appeared in their midst they thought they saw a spirit. It was only after they had touched Him, spoken with Him, and seen Him eat, that they believed. Afterwards they all testified of this to Thomas, who was absent, and he did not believe them. He wished to convince himself of Christ's personal identity by touching His Wounds. Christ appeared thus to His followers during forty days, speaking of His Kingdom, sometimes at night, sometimes by daytime, sometimes in enclosed places, sometimes in the open fields, sometimes to individual persons, sometimes to all the Apostles together, or to large crowds, as many as five hundred persons at once, as is testified by St. Paul.* The Apostle John could thus say:† "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, we bear witness and declare unto you." In establishing any fact it is impossible to act more circumspectly and critically than the Apostles and first disciples did.

Perhaps they had an interest in deceiving them-

* 1 Cor. xv. † 1 St. John i.

selves and others? We know the duties which were imposed on them and their followers by the Resurrection of Christ, we know their life, their sufferings, their cruel end. If we do not believe witnesses who seal their testimony with their death, whom then shall we believe? It was only the risen Christ Who could gather together again the scattered disciples; only His Resurrection could induce them to do more for Him after His Death than before it; it is only by His Resurrection that we can explain the resumption, fulfilment, and permanence for eighteen hundred years of His work. Had Christ remained in the grave, then His whole enterprise would have remained buried with Him for ever.

Christ rose, therefore, from the dead as certainly as Christianity exists. Nevertheless the "Unknown One," in his fragments in Lessing, asks why Christ after His Resurrection did not appear before the High Council and obtain an official certificate of it in order to accredit His Apostles among foreign peoples. What ingenious thoughts clever people can sometimes have! Did not the High Council know that Christ had arisen? At any rate it knew that Christ was really dead, and had not been removed from the grave by His disciples. It knew accordingly that Christ had fulfilled His promise. His holy Life had been blasphemed by the Scribes and Pharisees, His manifestly Divine miracles had been ascribed by them to Beelzebub, and they had wanted to put again to death Lazarus, who had been raised from

the grave. Would they not have found a new subterfuge if Christ had appeared in their midst? Would they not have attempted another crime? People deceive themselves in supposing that God must force men to believe who do not want to do so. If the demands of reason have been satisfied towards obtaining a reasonable faith, God's Wisdom leaves man to His own free will, on his own responsibility. But that God has brought the unbelieving Jews to account is made clear for every one who has eyes to see by the history of that people from the Death of Christ until the present day.

The idea, however, of the author of the fragment, that the Apostles ought to have had the Resurrection of Christ attested by the High Council (doubtlèssly countersigned by Pilate), and thus accredited their preaching, goes beyond all admissible ingenuousness. If the High Council and Pilate had become Christians, then the author and persons who hold with him would have attached no value to their testimony. Their official attestation would have been infallibly rejected as apocryphal, for the good reason that such men could not possibly stand up before the world as murderers of their God. But if they remained, as they did, in unbelief, what value would their testimony have had? And was a testimony of this kind to be expected? It is certainly not a very skilful artifice on the part of infidels, to reject as suspicious the testimony of Christians for their religion, and on the other hand to demand proofs

from Jews and Pagans. Testimony in one's own cause may be suspicious when the passions come into play, and when some possible advantage is held out by falsehood. But when a Christian gives evidence in favour of his own creed, is he therefore to be regarded with suspicion? We men all testify against ourselves when we speak for Christianity, because Christianity declares war against all the passions of the human heart. To the Apostles and first Christians their confession held out no other prospect than to be rejected by friends and relatives, persecuted by the authorities as outlawed and abandoned beings and butchered as criminals against the State. If their testimony is rejected as suspicious, from what quarter shall we get the truth? From our enemies? In any case a fact which is testified by friends and enemies stands immoveably firm. But can the testimony of enemies be demanded as indispensable? To confine ourselves to the case in point, can a Jew or a Pagan openly and directly bear witness to the Resurrection of Christ and still remain Jew or Pagan? What value would the testimony of such a man have?

Christ gave His Apostles more reliable and more effectual credentials, namely, the power to work miracles like Himself, the grace to live holily, and the strength to die heroically. The Resurrection of Christ was laid down by them as the foundation of our faith and the security of our hopes. Upon it, as being the chief proof of Christ's Godhead, rests

the whole Christian edifice. Without it Christianity would be nowhere. Had Christ mouldered in the grave, Christianity would have remained dead for ever. It lives, because Christ lives; for eighteen centuries it has withstood all attempts at annihilation, because Christ, Who rose from the dead, dieth now no more.

Conclusion.

Let us now recapitulate shortly what we have said above. Christ not only frequently affirmed in His discourses, but also testified judicially and on oath, that He was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, of one Essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and that He became Man in order to redeem mankind. For this and only for this reason He suffered death. Whoever, then, does not credit this assertion of Christ's must cease, at least if he has any self-respect, to call himself a Christian, and turn away from Christ either with the contempt that is due to a deceiver or with the compassion that is always felt for a madman.

But we have no reason for doing so. For Christ's testimony contains nothing that is untrue, nothing that contradicts reason. The dogmas of the Divine Trinity, of the Incarnation and Redemption, are, it is true, mysteries, but certainly not absurdities. Christ's testimony, sealed by His Death, is accordingly credible in itself. Far from discovering anything in Christ

which could throw suspicion on it, we have found that everything confirmed it. His history, revealed to the Prophets by God long centuries before His appearance on earth, is that of the God-Man, of the Redeemer; His moral character that of the God-Man, His teaching that of a Divine Person, His miracles the works of the Lord of all creatures, and, lastly, His Resurrection is the act of the Lord of life and death.

The Godhead of Christ is consequently placed beyond all doubt; no truth has been proved from more sides or more thoroughly. It is, therefore, an undeniable fact that God's Son, from love towards us poor human beings, became Man in order to show us the way to salvation not only by His teaching, but also by His example; that He, the innocent One, freely took on Himself our debt of sin, and cancelled it by His sufferings and bitter Death. If, then, a man knows Christ, and does not unite himself to Him in faith, hope, and charity, is he not a rebel against God? What hope of salvation can he cherish?

The enemies of Christ have for eighteen centuries spent their pains in useless battles against Him; they despair of destroying the work of the God-Man by so-called scientific attacks, because they have been always victoriously warded off. In our times, therefore, they take to other tactics. They ignore superciliously all proofs of the Divinity of Christianity and therewith all the rights granted it by God. It is not to reason, but to the passions that they now appeal. Just as they ignore God, so they ignore the higher nature and

dignity of man; they simply make him an animal. In that way, no doubt, man gets rid of all higher thoughts; he renounces all faith in future heavenly weal, and bids adieu to all moral endeavour in order to satisfy merely his animal desires so far as possible. Once he has abandoned his faith in an eternal life, in a paradise beyond the grave, he has no option but to create a paradise for himself here on earth. But is the earth large enough for that? Evidently not. Alexander the Great, after he had conquered a large part of the world as known in his time, heard it conjectured that perhaps the moon might also be inhabited; he wept like a child because he knew of no means of also conquering the moon. Where can we find a powerful ruler who would not gladly acquire by conquest a few more provinces, even though it cost ever so much blood and tears? At no epoch of history has there been more written and talked about material progress, gain, and industry than to-day. Is mankind satisfied? Has the ghastly wound of pauperism ever forced a more piercing cry of pain from mankind and been fraught with greater danger than just now? The rich have never acquired enough, the poor have never eaten and drunk enough. Such was bound to be the case as soon as the human heart, created for infinite and eternal weal, cast itself with all its greed upon this clod of earth.

The God-Man knew it, and because He wished to redeem us in reality He did not appear as a Messiah of riches, of lusts, and of honours. He

became poorer than ever man was, to deprive poverty of its sting and wealth of its insatiableness. In His hidden life in the workshop of His foster-father, He sanctified and ennobled modest labour. He became the Man of Sorrows, in order that our craving for pleasure might at least learn to respect the limits of morality. He became obedient unto death on the Cross, and submitted to all manner of wrong to teach us reverence towards every competent authority. Thus Christ not only satisfied Divine Justice for our sins and redeemed us from the eternal punishment of sin, but also frees us, if we will follow Him, from that woe which the triple concupiscence, the root of all sin, spreads over our present life. This true freedom of the children of God has been enjoyed since Christ by all saints and true Christians. The richest in the world were always those who were voluntarily poor. None have enjoyed life more purely and blissfully than the chaste and temperate. The most contented and the quietest were always the humble and modest. He who does not attain this moral freedom through Christ may revel in riches, lusts, and honours; he remains nevertheless a slave, and will never know what happiness is. Christ is the only Redeemer of men for time and eternity, and without Him there is no salvation.

The states of Christendom, however, seem inclined to make an experiment in the contrary direction. Christ's precepts are completely set aside, the spiritual power of Christianity kept apart from every influence

on public life ; everything is dechristianized, particularly marriage and the school. We shall see whither that leads us. The easy-going revolutionists in kid gloves imagine that they are thus emancipating themselves from God, and think that they are nevertheless wise and strong enough to rule the people like a herd, and extort all that is to be got from them. Fools ! After taking away from the crowd their temporal goods, do they believe that they can rob them of their faith and then of all hope of higher good, of all consolation, without ever paying the penalty ? When God is feared no longer, will these gentlemen be any further respected ?

What substitute is proposed for Christianity ? Soldiers perhaps, a system of police, prison-warders, executioners. This is the direction taken by humanity —namely, to dechristianize men, to make monsters of them, and then shoot them down. As a fact, the path on which we have entered can only bring us to a war of all against all. Nationality, set in the place of Christian love of country and neighbour, can only produce wars of annihilation. What sort of generation will come forth from a creedless school ? The dissolution of Christian morality, which cannot exist without faith, destroys all legal relations in the family, the community, and the State. The secularizing or profaning of marriage makes a purely civil contract of it, which can be annulled like every other. What will then become of the family, of the children ? There will remain only one step to the complete

abolition of marriage, to the *Venus vulgivaga*, where the males kill each other for the females. If the family no longer exists, how can there be any more right of inheritance or private property? In the event of common property who will voluntarily undertake the laborious, unhealthy, disgusting kinds of work? Who will not prefer being a dealer in work, an overseer, to being a workman? In the most favourable case, the result will be merely a stern house of correction.

Let us not deceive ourselves. We Christian peoples have no other civilization than that which was brought us by Christianity; if we throw this away, we have none. All other forms of religion are for us stages that are passed and lie behind us. If we cease to be Christians, we do not become Jews, or Mohammedans, or common Pagans, we become atheists. But no human society can stand upon atheism. Back then in all earnestness to Christ, or onwards into the abyss.

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